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Sustainable organisations and how people learn to create them

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Hopkins, Bryan (2020). Sustainable organisations and how people learn to create them. Postgraduate Research Poster Competition, The Open University.

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Version: Poster

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sustainable organisations and how people learn to create them



Climate change, pollution, loss of biodiversity, inequality, pandemics, the list goes on.

We are living in a risk society, where what we know and what we do with it is starting to endanger our existence.

To avoid the possibility of our global society overshooting and collapsing, we need to adopt more sustainable lifestyles. As the engines of economic activity, organisations, large and small, private and public, are coming under increasing pressure to adopt sustainability strategies.

But what does sustainability mean for an organisation? It is a contested concept, and so it is not easy for people to learn what sustainability means, learn how they need to change, and learn how they can maintain sustainability. Human Resource Development (HRD) functions within organisations have the responsibility for facilitating learning, but... The level of change is considerable, requiring a reorientation of value systems for employees and organisations, and in most organisations, HRD professionals struggle to exercise the political power they need to play their part.

So what pedagogical practices can HRD adopt to reorient the ethical climate? And how can they exercise the necessary power in their organisations to make this happen?

My research is using systems thinking approaches to look at what sustainability means for an organisation and how learning can make it happen.

For example, here is a System Dynamics causal flow diagram, which we can use as a heuristic device to reflect on how learning may operate within an organisation.

